India's stand on Minimum Nuclear Deterrent

533. SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have reviewed its stand on the Minimum Nuclear Deterrent, in the light of the US Government's announcement about building up its National Missile Defence (NMD) system while minimizing nuclear arsenal; and

(b) if so, the outcome thereof indicating the Chinese and Pakistani reaction to the US proposal for NMD?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

India's stand on Shift in United State's Nuclear Strategy

534. SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have endorsed the US Nuke strategy shift as spelt out by the US President George Bush in a speech in Virginia on 2nd May, 2001 to shift the US's nuclear strategy away from deterrence towards missile defence and summed as erecting a shield while simultaneously blunting the sword;

(b) if so, with what qualifications and reservations, if any; and

(c) the US response to India's stand?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH): (a) and (b) In Government's official statement of 2nd May 2001, it was stated, *inter alia*, that "India, particularly, welcomes the announcement of unilateral reductions by the US of nuclear forces, as an example. We also welcome moving away from the hair-trigger alerts associated with prevailing nuclear orthodoxies. India believes that there is a strategic and technological inevitability in stepping away from a world that is held hostage by the doctrine of MAD to a cooperative, defensive transition that is underpinned by further cuts and a de-alert of nuclear forces. We note with appreciation the US resolve to seek dialogue, consultation and

cooperation with the countries concerned towards a fulfilment of this vision. India has always stood for a multilateral compact that results in an elimination of all nuclear weapons globally".

(c) The US Special Envoy Mr. Richard Armitage, during his discussions in New Delhi on 11th May, 2001, explained the new strategic framework announced by President Bush and thanked the Government for his positive meetings in New Delhi.

Indo-Bangladesh Border Dispute

†535. SHRI JHUMUK LAL BHENDIA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of jawans killed by Bangladesh Rifles along Indo-Bangladesh border and the area wherein the disputed border falls together with the length thereof;

(b) the outcome achieved in regard to arriving at the solution to the border dispute after the martyrdom; and

(c) by when the dispute is likely to be solved?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH): (a) to (c) In the recent incidents at the India-Bangladesh border in April 2001, sixteen BSF personnel were killed.

Joint demarcation of about 6.5 km. of the India-Bangladesh land boundary is yet to be completed. There are also outstanding matters relating to exchange of enclaves and adverse possessions. The Government of India is keen on an early settlement of all boundary-related matters with Bangladesh in accordance with the terms of the India-Bangladesh Land Boundary Agreement of 1974.

The two Governments have agreed to constitute Joint Boundary Working Groups to address all pending matters.

The first meeting of the India-Bangladesh Joint Boundary Working Groups on Border Demarcation, and on Enclaves and Adversely Possessed Territories was held in Dhaka from July 2-4-2001. Both sides presented their respective positions on these matters in order to facilitate a clear understanding of each others' points of view and to address the issues in a pragmatic and time-bound manner.

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.